

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Commission Meeting May 5, 2009

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Laurie Jean Hannon at 5:35 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Thomas Balga, Walter Heinig, Judith Meyers, Laurie-Jean Hannon, Donna Malley

Staff: Gerardo Sorkin, Director, Judith Amarone, Manager, Joyce C. Budrow Senior Center and Carla Pelliccio, Secretary

Absent: William Carey, Michael Compare, Maggie Jensen, Judith McKay

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Donna Malley made a motion to accept the Minutes of March 3, 2009, seconded by Tom Balga.

III. Correspondence:

A letter of resignation was submitted to First Selectwoman McCarty as well as Mr. Sorkin by Commissioner Michael Compare on May 4, 2009. He has decided to resign due to personal reasons.

Ms. Hannon received a letter from North Haven NDP Leadership Team regarding the National Day of Prayer. Two sessions of this town gathering will be held on Thursday, May 7, 2009 on the town green (12pm and 7pm).

IV. Director's Report:

Report by Judith Amarone, Manager, Joyce C. Budrow Senior Center

Ms. Amarone provided a bit of historical background on the Renovation Grant, from application to award (*April 2008-public hearing took place, May 2008-Planning and Zoning Commission approved, October 2008-was awarded the \$750,000 grant from the Department of Economic and Community Development*). With the center's numbers continually growing as well as the need for renovations, the application for the grant was submitted. The grant will allow the Senior Center to expand 875 square feet with the addition of two rooms.

They have begun moving forward with the renovations. The garages had been taken down by members of Public Works, which proved to be a savings as these monies were not used from the grant. Ms. Amarone then provided the architectural plans to the Commissioners and provided a detailed description of the renovations, room by room, including the handicapped accessible features. The poster board of these plans were also provided for NHTV cameras to capture. In addition to the expansion details, Ms. Amarone also discussed the areas to be renovated as well as appliances that will be upgraded. The new center will be ADA accessible and energy efficient (lighting, windows).

The contract was signed last week with winning bidder, Construx. The center will close its doors to the public tomorrow (5/6/09) at 4:30pm and will reopen in 150 days from the date the construction begins. Construction will begin on May 18, 2009. October 16, 2009 is the target date for the renovated center to reopen. The American Legion has granted permission for the use of their facility during the renovations, free of charge. During the time of renovation all classes that include physical activity, including dance classes painting lessons will be held at the recreation center. The book club and the chorus will meet at the library. Daily meals, bridge, bingo, crafts, and quieter programs will be held at the American Legion, and thus daily lunch, daily and medical and transportation will not change. They are simply spreading out their operations among town.

On May 7th and 8th, special outings for senior members have been planned since the Center is Closed, May 7 the seniors are going to a Rock Cats Baseball Game in New Britain and on May 8 shopping at the Meriden Square and lunch. In addition, a program has been developed to run over the summer months which will allow the seniors to become "Senior Food Critics." The local restaurants on Washington Ave. have been contacted to obtain permission to allow the seniors to come to their restaurants to taste their food, rate them for service and for price. All restaurants have granted permission. In addition, Food Critic Paul Calella from the North Haven Citizen has agreed to do a weekly article.

In order to become more familiar with the population served by the Senior Center, Ms. Meyers had asked for Ms. Amarone to explain who utilizes the center. Ms. Amarone discussed the membership criteria (60 years + and North Haven residents), as well as the other varied age groups of individuals who utilize the bus transportation and partake in all of the various activities (service individuals ages 60 to 96 years of age). One of the groups in particular are those who come for daily lunch. A \$2.00 donation is requested. There is no membership fee. Lunch is open to not only North Haven residents, but also any surrounding towns including New Haven, East Haven and West Haven, as the lunch program is a federally funded program. Approximately 50 people eat lunch daily; approximately 100 people attend when they have entertainment. Ms. Amarone also wanted to make sure that the community is aware that medical transportation (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays) is free. They travel to North Haven, Hamden, and New Haven. Service is curb to curb.

While North Haven Senior Center is not as large as other senior centers, Ms. Amarone has been told that they have a friendly center as staff greets you and makes you part of the group, and this connection that is created among staff and seniors is what sets this center apart from others. Ms. Amarone encouraged people to join.

Report by Gerardo Sorkin, Director

In continuation of the conversation of the Senior Center, Mr. Sorkin reiterated that amidst the renovations, the Senior Center operations and activities will continue in full operation.

Copies of the May 2009 *Senior Happenings* brochure of activities and events were distributed to each Commission member.

During the April 7th meeting, Ms. Hannon stated that a few people had asked her (after the Senior Center garage had already been torn down) whether the individuals in Public Works were licensed for that type of demolition. As promised to the commissioners, Mr. Sorkin followed up with Lynn Sadosky, Director of Public Works. Ms. Sadosky confirmed that by law they were not required to obtain a demolition permit when tearing down an accessory structure, such as these garages at the Senior Center, however if it was the Senior Center structure itself, a permit would have been necessary.

Youth Services:

Project Graduation: many donations have been received from local businesses and parents.

The Substance Abuse Prevention Council: Nancy met with Walter Mann this week to review and edit footage from interview conducted last week with North Haven parent, Valerie, who presented at the 2/11/09 Community Forum. To review, this individual was the parent of a youth who is in the process of recovering from drug addiction. The original intent was to edit the footage for three 30-second PSAs; the footage was so good that it was edited into a 21-minute documentary to air on NHTV very soon.

On 4/29/09, the SAPC hosted a second presentation at the Recreation center, in which this parent presented again as well as included a presentation from her daughter, who spoke about addiction and recovery, and being sober for more than one year. This presentation will be aired on NHTV.

Summer Employment through the Workforce Alliance: The Youth Services Bureau in partnership with North Haven Public School received a \$42,600 grant. This program is intended for youth who are North Haven residents between the ages of 14 and 24 years of age, who meet a certain income eligibility, or are in special education programs.

Press releases have been sent to local papers to announce this opportunity, and it will be posted on the town website this week. Various jobs will be available in both the public (town departments) and private sectors at the wage of \$8.00/hr.

Daycare:

Enrollment: Preschool – all slots are filled/ 15 children; School Age – all slots are filled/ 30 children.

Staff training/development: Staff continue to receive training on Challenging Behaviors in School-Age Children. Staff attended a Challenging Behavior Workshop given by ACES. Part 3 to complete the course will take place in May.

Personnel: Peggy Claflin will resign from her position of Teacher Aide/Clerk to take a position at the Police Department in the Records Department. Her last day will be 5/6/09. They are currently looking at reorganizing some of the infrastructure of the Daycare to ensure that the appropriate services are being provided to the children.

Counseling:

Waiting list: Appointments are being scheduled as inquiry calls are triaged; currently have a 1-2 week wait list.

Documentation updates: Continuing to move forward with this plan to convert to electronic medical records (EMR), which will allow us to submit all billing information electronically, among many other functions. The forms and templates have been identified and are in the process of formalizing the process. Once the scheduling feature has been synchronized, the next step will be to pilot the program with a handful of clients. The goal is to have this implemented by 7/1/09.

Community Services:

Monthly Food Bank Statistics for May 2009: 495 meals were distributed in the month of May 2009. 55 family members have been served in May, versus 41 family members who were served in the previous month. The formula to make the determination for meals provided is = number of household members x 9.

Donation received: A donation in the amount of \$1997.00 was donated to the Department of Community Services and Recreation by the North Haven Beautification Committee this past week. The committee requested that these funds be utilized to benefit those residents who have financial hardship. The donation has been deposited into the town's Emergency Fund, and will be used appropriately. This committee is no

longer in existence and decided to make this donation with the remaining funds that they had. A special thanks was made to Donna Malley, Ann Simpson and Judith Amarone as members of this committee.

Early Childhood Education Community Conversation: This event took place at North Haven High School on 4/27/09 from 5-9pm. 81 people attended this event. Since Ms. Meyers had attended this event, Mr. Sorkin asked her to provide a summary of the meeting intent, format as well as the varied ideas that were presented that evening. Mr. Heinig was also in attendance at this event. The planning committee is in the process of tabulating the evaluations and will summarize the findings. These findings will be presented during the follow up conversation scheduled to take place at the high school on May 26th, from 6-7pm.

As Ms. Meyers has been trying to learn more about the children in North Haven, she found data in which answered this question. This data (which included statistics on poverty levels, attendance and dropout rates, among others) was shared with all of the commissioners.

V. Finance Report:

The March 2009 budget reports were reviewed by the Commission (report ending March 31, 2009).
Community Services: Current snapshot of Community Services expenditures:

March 2009: bottom line under budget = 64.1%

Welfare: Current snapshot of Welfare expenditures (eviction related expenses) were distributed and reviewed.

March 2009: bottom line over budget = 78.9%

Senior Center: Current snapshot of Senior Center expenditures were distributed and reviewed.

March 2009: bottom line under budget = 69.9%

Daycare: Current snapshot of expenditures through the Daycare grant were reviewed. Currently a balance of \$8,114.45 is still available.

Special Funds : Gerardo asked the commissioners to review the monthly snapshot of the Special Funds and welcomed any questions.

VI. Old Business:

None to discuss.

VII. New Business:

None to discuss.

VIII. Public Participation:

A North Haven High School student was in attendance who was completing his community service hours. He attended this meeting in order to earn extra credit.

IX. Adjournment:

Laurie Jean Hannon asked for a Motion to Adjourn accepted by Judith Meyers, seconded by Walter Heinig. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.